

**CONFIDENTIAL**

2 May 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, CIG

Subject: Attached Memorandum - Background of  
Central Intelligence

1. It would appear to be probable that members of Congress called upon to consider legislation relating to central intelligence are unlikely to have any but the foggiest of notions concerning its philosophy or *raison d'etre*. It seemed to me possible that you might consider favorably the possibility of having presented to them officially some document which would provide them with a background against which specific verbal testimony would take on greater meaning. Such a document might also obviate the excessively elementary type of question which is so apt to delay the progress of Congressional hearings.

2. In going over the files of possibly useful documents I came across a memorandum prepared by the Strategic Services Unit for the War Department committee of inquiry headed by Assistant Secretary Lovett. One part of this memorandum, with which I am particularly familiar because I wrote it at the direction of General Magruder, seemed particularly well adapted for the desired use. I have revised it somewhat, eliminating certain too technical parts and expanding others which might be ambiguous. The result is attached for your consideration.

3. It is my belief that this document can be given a classification of "Confidential" since its contents are quite general. The original paper was classified "Secret" but it contained much more specific information than does the attachment, and it was written at a time when central intelligence was as yet a future development in fact.

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**CONFIDENTIAL***First + last page  
Copied of 15  
plus one carbon  
Exactly the same*BACKGROUND OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

1. The conception of a centralized foreign intelligence agency for the United States Government grew out of experience acquired in World War II when the lack of coordination between the various departmental and other intelligence services seriously handicapped the military effort. The organization which was established by the President's directive of 22 January 1946 was the result of prolonged study on the part of the various interested departments and agencies. The form of the directive establishing the National Intelligence Authority and the Central Intelligence Group, was suggested in a draft unanimously concurred in by the Secretaries of State, War and Navy which was submitted to the President on 7 January 1946.

2. The form of the Secretaries' draft was greatly influenced by the report of a War Department committee headed by Assistant Secretary Lovett. This committee had held extensive hearings during October 1945 and had received numerous recommendations concerning the future foreign intelligence activities of the U.S. Government. One of these recommendations, submitted by the Strategic Services Unit, presented so clearly the reasoning behind the central intelligence agency concept

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the present services but which are not strictly related to their functions. The present departmental services would be expected to continue their operations without change, under the sole limitation that they concern themselves primarily with the overt collection of foreign intelligence peculiar to their respective activities, together with the evaluation, analysis and dissemination of such intelligence. All other functions which could more efficiently be performed centrally for the benefit of the government as a whole would be assigned to the central intelligence agency. Certain of these central functions have in part been described in the previous pages. Others will at once suggest themselves to anyone familiar with the subject of foreign intelligence.

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Military Affairs Committee, Senate

Armed Forces Department. Department of Armed Forces, Department of Military Security, hearings, 79th Congress, 1st session on S.84 to provide for Department of Armed Forces, Secretary of Armed Forces, Under Secretaries of Army, Navy, and Air, and for other purposes S.1482, to establish Department of Military Security, to consolidate therein military security activities of United States, and for other purposes, October 17 - December 17, 1945. 1945. vi, 707p.

Attached to a newspaper article  
"The New York Times" Friday Oct 19, 1945